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A NEW WOODRAT (*NEOTOMA MEXICANA*) FROM  
THE LAVA BEDS OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

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AMONG a collection of mammals made on the malpais near Carrizozo, New Mexico, by L. R. Dice in 1937 is one specimen of *Neotoma mexicana* which is nearly as dark in color as specimens of *Neotoma albigula melas* Dice taken at the same place. W. F. Blair visited the same locality in October, 1938, and was successful in trapping another specimen which is slightly darker in coloration than the one collected previously. I feel justified in describing these two specimens, collected over a year apart and almost identical in coloration, as being representative of a race which probably occupies the lava fields in this region. This adds one more species of mammal to the accumulating list of those in which the evolution of pelage color has been in the direction of the predominating color of the soil. I wish to propose for this lava-inhabiting race the name

*Neotoma mexicana atrata*, new subspecies

Mexican Woodrat

TYPE.—Female subadult, skeleton and skin; U.M.M.Z. No. 81167; New Mexico, Lincoln County, four miles west of Car-

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rizo; October 21, 1938; collected by W. F. Blair, original No. 1164.

COTYPE.—Male subadult, skull and skin; U.M.M.Z. No. 79064; collected July 15, 1937; by L. R. Dice, original No. 37-30.

MEASUREMENTS (in mm.).—The first measurement given is of the type and the second of the cotype. Total length, 303, 281; tail vertebrae, 144, 135; hind foot, 32.6, 31.8. Skull: basilar length of Hensel, 32.4, 31.2; zygomatic breadth, 22.0, 21.3; interorbital breadth, 5.9, 5.4; length of nasals, 16.2, 15.5; length of incisive foramina, 8.3, 8.0; length of palatal bridge, 7.4, 7.5; alveolar length of upper molar series, 9.2, 8.6.

DISTRIBUTION.—Known only from the type locality, but probably ranges over the entire lava field, which extends south and west into Otero County, New Mexico.

CHARACTERS.—A dark-colored, nearly black race of *Neotoma mexicana*.

COMPARISONS.—As compared with *N. m. mexicana*, *atrata* is distinctly darker in coloration throughout, except on some of the toes, which are still white. Also, the throat of the cotype is about as it is in specimens of *mexicana*. The buffy subterminal bands on the hairs of the upper parts, which give to *mexicana* its predominant color, are much narrower, nearly obsolete, in *atrata*. The buffy color is thereby subordinated by black in *atrata*. The metapodial regions of the feet are deep dusky, nearly black in the type, instead of white. The tail is black above and below in the type, dark gray below in the cotype. The underparts are distinctly darker than they are in *mexicana*. There is also an additional wash of buff on the chest, middle of belly, and flanks. The hairs everywhere, except on the toes, are plumbeous at the bases. The ears are black. From *N. m. fallax*, *atrata* differs essentially as it does from *mexicana*.

REMARKS.—The development of the black color has not gone as far in *Neotoma m. atrata* as in *N. albigula melas*. Although the subterminal buffy bands on the hairs have been reduced, they have not been replaced entirely by black. Further, the

black has not encroached on the ventral surface to the extent that it has in *melas*.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED.—*Neotoma m. mexicana*: Arizona, Cochise County, 10; Texas, Jeff Davis County, 11. *Neotoma m. fallax*: Colorado, Las Animas County, 1; New Mexico, Otero County, 11; Lincoln County, 5. *Neotoma m. atrata*: New Mexico, Lincoln County, 2.

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